

Message Text

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63

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07

OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 INT-08 CU-04

NIC-01 OPR-02 SY-10 RSR-01 /198 W
----- 087935

R 020800 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1150

INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 0336

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MR

SUBJ: POLICE- ARMY SHOOT OUT RAISES TENSION NOUAKCHOTT.

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 0331

SUMMARY. AN ARMY- POLICE CLASH WHICH LEFT TWO DEAD AND THE INVOLVE-
MENT OF A HANDFUL OF ENLISTED SOLDIERS IN ANTI- GOVERNMENT
PAMPHLETEERING ADDS A NEW DIMENSION TO THE DEEPENING SENSE OF
MALAISE IN THIS DUSTY CAPITAL. ARMY- POLICE LOYALTY TO THE REGIME
IS NOT APPARENTLY AT ISSUE.

1. REFTEL REPORTED DISTRIBUTION NUMBER OF PAMPHLETS OVER PAST
FEW WEEKS IN CAPITAL WHICH REFLECTIVE OF GENERAL MALAISE
DEEPENING HERE SINCE TURN OF YEAR. ON APRIL 28 AND 29 CLASH
OCCURRED BETWEEN REPS OF POLICE AND ARMY WHICH HAS INTRODUCED
POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE FACTOR.

2. EVENING APRIL 28 POLICE ROUNDED UP DEMONSTRATORS IN DOWN-
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TOWN AREA WHO HAD BEEN CAUGHT IN NATIONAL SPORT OF SLOGAN
WRITING ON WALLS AND HANDING OUT MIMEOGRAPHED TRACTS. TAKEN TO
POLICE HEADQUARTERS, IT DEVELOPED THAT AMONG THOSE ARRESTED WERE
TWO SOLDIERS IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES. THESE WERE REPORTEDLY SINGLED

OUT FOR ESPECIALLY SEVERE BEATING AT POLICE HANDS. FOLLOWING EVENING, SMALL BAND OF SOLDIERS WENT DOWNTOWN SEEKING OUT POLICE TO REVENGE COMRADES AND FINDING ISOLATED GROUP OF POLICE SET UPON THEM WITH CLUBS. POLICE THEREUPON DREW WEAPONS AND FIRED. ONE SOLDIER KILLED OUTRIGHT, SECOND DIED LATER IN HOSPITAL AND SOME FIVE OTHERS REPORTEDLY ARE SERIOUSLY WOUNDED.

3. GENDARMERIE AND NATIONAL GUARD PATROLS BLANKETED CITY APRIL 30 AND FOR FIRST TIME SINCE 1966, NOUAKCHOTT WAS PLACED UNDER CURFEW (EFFECTIVE 2230 HOURS - 0600 MAY 1.) STATE RADIO, WHICH ONLY GENERAL MEANS COMMUNICATION IN THIS NEWSPAPERLESS COUNTRY, HAS REMAINED SILENT ABOUT INCIDENT AND EVEN NEWS OF CURFEW WAS PASSED VERBALLY BY SECURITY AUTHORITIES WHO CLOSED ALL MOVIE THEATRES AND RESTAURANTS IN EARLY EVENING.

4. ON SURFACE ALL IS NORMAL MAY 1, MID- AFTERNOON. AUTHORITIES CARRIED THROUGH WITH PROGRAMMED PARADE OF TRADE UNION REPS THROUGH CITY IN OBSERVANCE LABOR DAY. MASS MEETING AT PARTY HEADQUARTERS ADDRESSED BY MIN LABOR AND NEWLY ELECTED SEC GEN OF UTM WAS ALSO HELD AS SCHEDULED. IN HIS SPEECH, MINISTER BARO MADE PASSING REFERENCE TO " THOSE PAMPHLET WRITERS WHO IMPUTE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF COUNTRY TO FAILURES OF INDIVIDUALS (I. E. LEADERS) AND IGNORE FACT THAT MAURITANIA SUFFERING UNPRECEDENTED DROUGHT FROM WHICH ONLY WORK OF ALL CITIZENS CAN RESCUE COUNTRY."

5. NEWLY PUBLICIZED ORGANIZATION CALLING ITSEL" CARL" (COMITE D' ACTION REVOLUTIONNAIRE LOCAL" HAS ALREADY CIRCULATED A MIMEO- GRAPHED SHEET RECOUNTING, WITH NONE OF FOREGOING BACKGROUND, APRIL 29 SHOOT UP AND ATTACKING OULD DADDAH AS FASCIST. IT CALLS ON MAURITANIANS, MILITARY AND CIVILIAN ALIKE TO TAKE TO THE STREETS WITH FOLLOWING DEMANDS:

- A. IMMEDIATE, SEVERE PUNISHMENT FOR THOSE GUILTY OF MASSACRING ARMY PERSONNEL;
 - B. INDEMNITY OF THE MARTYRS FAMILIES;
 - C. FREEING OF ALL ARRESTED SOLDIERS AND SAILORS;
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- D. ENDING OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND DEMOCRATIZING DISCIPLINE;
- E. IMPROVEMENT OF SOLDIERS' MATERIAL CONDITIONS.

PAMPHLET ALSO CALLS FOR NATIONALIZATION OF MIFERMA, IRON MINES IN WHICH FRENCH ARE MAJOR STOCK HOLDERS, RAISING SALARIES, LOWERING PRICES AND DISTRIBUTION OF FOODSTUFFS AND MEDICINES FREE TO THE MASSES.

6. COMMENT. THIS IS NOT FIRST DISPLAY OF FRICTION BETWEEN ARMY AND POLICE; LAST SUCH DUST UP OCCURED IN 1969. HOWEVER, FROM POINT OF VIEW OF REGIME, THIS FURTHER INCIDENT COULD NOT HAVE OCCURED AT MORE AWKWARD TIME GIVEN GIRM' S OTHER PREOCCUP-

ATIONS WITH POLITICAL DISSENT AND ECONOMIC UNREST. WOULD NOTE
THAT THUS FAR ALL THAT IS ESTABLISHED IS FACT INDIVIDUAL SOLDIERS
HAVE JOINED RANKS OF DISSENTERS. LOYALTY OF ARMY PER SE NOT
BELIEVED AT ISSUE. GDS.
MURPHY

CONFIDENTIAL

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